

Eight Ways of Deceiving Ourselves - Part 4

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the importance of choosing the right company and recognizing self-deception in our spiritual lives.

Duration: 10:13

Scripture: Genesis 19:15

Topics: "Fellowship And Accountability", "Spiritual Humility"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of choosing the right company and fellowship, highlighting how bad company can corrupt good morals and lead to self-deception. It discusses the need to seek fellowship with those who are spiritually aligned and to be cautious of the influence of worldly conversations and pursuits. The message also warns against self-deception in thinking too highly of oneself based on seniority or gifts, reminding that true humility is essential in the Christian walk.

Transcript

Because that shows where your heart is. It says, even about a person like Lot, that he suffered living there in Sodom. His trouble was, he had a very bad wife, was interested in all that wealth.

Of course, he himself was, but he got a little tired of it after some time, but his wife wouldn't let go. But he got, it says, he vexed his soul. And do you find yourself like that in the office? You're in the midst of all types of worldly people with all their filthy conversation and their evil pursuits to you.

Say, oh Lord, I want to, this place is so filthy. It's like living in a slum. I want to get out of it and get into some clean atmosphere.

One mark of the fact that we've really come into life in Christ is that we seek fellowship with those who have also come to life in Christ. I mean, no living person would like to go and live in a cemetery. No clean living person would like to go and live in a slum.

There's a revulsion there. Even if you have to spend more money, you'd rather spend that money and live in a decent place. And that's a mark of God's children.

It's not that they hate worldly people, but they don't like bad company. The illustration I've always used is, should we be friends of sinners? Jesus was a friend of sinners. And certainly we can be friends of sinners, provided we are as strong.

And the illustration I've used is of the tug of war. Your friends are on that side trying to pull you towards the world, and you're on this side trying to pull them towards Christ. I hope you are.

And if you find that the rope is going that way, drop it. Run away. But if you find that you are pulling some of them towards the Lord, keep that friendship.

That's the test of which friends I can keep and which friends I should chuck. With each person I see, that's a tug of war between me and that person, and between me and that person, me and that person, me and that person. Who's winning here? In this case, I find he's winning.

So I say, well, I'm not strong enough, let me drop it. But in this case, I find I'm winning. I can perhaps bring that person to Christ.

Let me keep that friendship. If you follow that rule, you won't go wrong. But don't ever think that bad company will not corrupt you.

And when we talk about bad company, there are different levels of this. You know, there's this outright worldly sinful company. That's one thing.

But also, the same principle applies to the type of believers you seek to fellowship with in a church. I mean, you know very well, as I know, that all believers in a church are not equally spiritual. No.

There's no church where all believers are equally spiritual. There's tremendous varying standards. I mean, it's like school children from kindergarten to 12th standard or degree levels.

In a church, you see people in that level, different levels. And it's just like a city where some live in the slums and slums live in very clean houses. In the church also, the difference is very much of, and you can see, particularly in the type of conversation that most people engage in.

You mix with certain young people and they're always talking about certain things. And you mix with certain other young people and they're always talking about certain other things. And you make a choice which type of young person you want to be with.

That's your choice. And you'd say, no, no, no, that's not going to corrupt me. This verse is written for you.

The type of company you keep is going to corrupt you. It's probably already corrupted you. And you don't even know it.

That is self-deception. If we knew it, then of course we wouldn't be deceived. I mean, if somebody gives me a 500 rupee note and I know it's a counterfeit, I'm not deceived.

It's when I think it's a real 500 rupee note, that's when I'm deceived. It's when I think, you know, even though I mingle with these young people, I'm still spiritual, that's when you're deceived. Bad company corrupts good morals.

They say in the world, birds of a feather flock together. And it's true. There's a lot of truth in that proverb that we gravitate towards people who talk about certain type of things.

Why? Because we like to talk about those type of things. And we don't mingle with certain other people because they're talking about certain other things which we're not so keen on talking about. And if we had

chosen the right type of company, perhaps we'd have been a lot more spiritual today than we are.

And in a church, in this church, each of you, particularly you young people, are choosing a certain type of company. You make a certain type of a young brother or a young sister your role model. Say, I want to be like that.

I want to talk like that person, dress like that person, behave like that person, and do everything like that person, and see where you are today spiritually. And there are others who refuse that and say, no, I'm not going to go down. Let them be like that.

I don't judge them. Let them go their way. But I'm not going to go that way and see the difference in them.

There are lots of difference. You don't see it initially, but some years go by and you see the type of company a person has kept, has determined where they are spiritually today, particularly young people. And you know there's a lot of difference in the spiritual level of the young brothers and the young sisters in our church and in every church.

And that's determined by the type of company they long to be with, which is mostly determined by the type of conversation, the type of interest they have. So please remember that. Don't deceive yourself saying you'll be able to overcome that.

You won't be able to. Then we go to number 4, and that's in Galatians in chapter 6. Number 4, Galatians chapter 6. We read here in chapter 6 and verse 3. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he is deceiving himself. So that is number 4. The other area where I can deceive myself, and if I deceive myself, as I said, I open myself to deception by deceitful spirits, is after having been a believer for some time, maybe I've been in the church for a number of years, or maybe you have a particular gift, could be preaching, singing, or leadership, or something, or some gift where others in the church recognize you.

You're not one of those who are hidden in the crowd. You're sort of a little prominent. Due to some ability you have, you're smart, maybe you're able to converse well, and a cheerful type of person whom everybody likes to be around.

You're very popular, and in the church you're not one of those non-entities. You're an important brother or sister, or a young brother or sister. Then you can begin to think that you are a somebody.

I'm not just an ordinary person now. I was years ago, but not now. That's the moment when self-deception begins.

If anyone thinks he's somebody, he's a nobody. He deceives himself. You know, it can come due to the feeling of seniority, like in government service.

I have been in the church for 20 years. I'm not a newcomer, like this other guy. I've been working for 12 hours.

Not like these people who've been working for, you know the story, one hour. How dare you, Lord, make me equal to them? That was their question. How can you make me equal to them? These fellows came yesterday.

I've been here for 25 years. I'm a senior brother. And the Lord says, many who are first will be last.

Not one or two. For one or two, I can understand. Many who are first will be last.

And many who are last will be first. Why? Because those people who are last didn't have any high opinion about themselves. They said, we're nobody.

We're thankful that God accepted us. But those guys who came first, they thought they were somebody.

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